

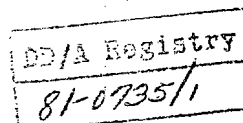
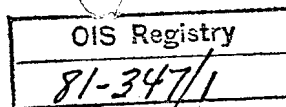
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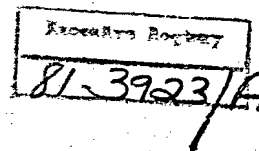
The Director  
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505



4 APR 1981



Mr. Robert M. Warner  
Archivist of the United States  
National Archives and Records Service (N)  
General Services Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Mr. Warner:

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 1981 concerning the OSS records. We have appreciated working with NARS these past several years in appraising and scheduling the OSS records for disposition. We have learned and benefited much from this association.

With respect to your comments on restrictions, it is true that CIA does not withhold all names when releasing OSS information. Names of U.S. persons are released if they were involved exclusively in military actions not requiring protection or if their affiliation with OSS has been officially acknowledged. Names of non-U.S. persons are released unless they are identified in foreign government information or are sources still requiring protection.

The specific restriction associated with the transfer to NARS is designed to preserve an understanding of confidentiality with OSS staff personnel who, though not technically intelligence sources, were involved in clandestine intelligence operations. In some cases, these persons are still involved in intelligence or living or working abroad under circumstances where revelation of their OSS affiliation could jeopardize their lives, their families, or their work. Therefore, it is not possible at this time to alter the restriction.

From our discussions with NARS personnel over the last several months, we understand how this restriction may be unworkable in the National Archives. CIA is prepared to accept the return of the records until such time as they can be released to NARS and the public without restriction. In keeping with the public's need to know and the rights of private citizens, we will continue to service research requests for OSS information as we have over the years.

Sincerely,

/s/ B. R. Inman

B. R. INMAN  
Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Acting Director

DDA/OIS/RMD/RSB,  DDO/IMS):br (8 April 1981)

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Distribution:

Original-Addressee

1-DCI

1-DDCI

1-Executive Registry

1-DDO/IMS

2-DDA

1-OIS Subject

1-OIS Chrono

1-RSB Subject: ~~005-200000~~

1-RSB Chrono

*005 Restrictions*

## Background

### DCI Reply to Letter from the Archivist Concerning OSS Records

The CIA declassification review of OSS records began in December 1972 when two retired Agency officers were engaged under contract to review OSS material that had been accessioned by the National Archives from the Department of State. This material originated in the element of OSS that had been transferred to the Department when OSS was abolished. The two officers completed this review in 1974 and then began a systematic review of the OSS records in CIA's custody. The review team subsequently was enlarged to a total of 15 retired officers. In 1978 the review of OSS material was incorporated into the Agency program for reviewing all SSU, CIG, and CIA records. This program carries out the provisions of Executive Order 12065 requiring the systematic review for declassification of all permanent, classified records over 20 years old.

The initial Agency transfer of OSS records to the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) was completed in January 1980. It consisted of 198 cubic feet of material declassified by the Agency. As part of this transfer, the Agency specified two "specific restrictions" to be imposed by NARS on the release of OSS information to the public:

- a. "Foreign Government Information must be afforded protection and will not be released without the prior approval of the government involved."
- b. "In keeping with the provisions of the Privacy Act information concerning the affiliation of U.S. persons with OSS may not be released without the consent of the person involved."

These restrictions were accepted in writing by NARS when the OSS records were accessioned into the National Archives.

Since the January 1980 transfer, various NARS officials have voiced concern that NARS, in order to make full use of the OSS records, would have to clear sensitive information relating to employment and personal activities with the U.S. person concerned before release to the public. Because of the burden of checking with each person, it would be impractical for NARS to use many of the records.

The question of restrictions has been under informal discussion with NARS for several months. One alternative we discussed was to close the accessioned records until a specified year after which all would be open to the public. The year 2020 (75 year restriction counted from 1945) was mentioned as a possible date, and we offered to store and service the records during any such period if NARS would prefer that we do so.

In these discussions we have been unable to arrive at an alternative restriction that is mutually acceptable to CIA and NARS. Therefore, we have decided that the matter can best be handled at this point by transferring the OSS records back into CIA custody. Following this transfer, we will continue to process requests for OSS information as we have done over the years.

*DDA*

UNCLASSIFIED	CONFIDENTIAL	SECRET
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**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT****Routing Slip**

TO:	ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI	X		
2	DDCI	X		
3	D/DCI/RM			
4	DD/NFA			
5	D/DCI/CT			
6	DD/A	X		
7	DD/O	X		
8	DD/S&T			
9	GC			
10	LC			
11	IG			
12	Compt			
13	D/PA			
14	D/EEO			
15	D/PPPM			
16	AQ/DCI			
17	PB/NSC			
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
SUSPENSE		9 April <small>Date</small>		

**Remarks:**

To 6: Please provide comment--coordinated with DDO--to DCI along with a response for the DCI's signature.

D/Executive Secretary  
6 April 1981  
Date

3637 (12-77)

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Services and  
Administration Records Service Washington, DC 20408

81-3923

OIS Registry

81-347

DD/A Registry

81-0735

APR 2 1981

Mr. William J. Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, DC 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

As you may know, the Central Intelligence Agency in 1979 offered to the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) for opening to public use Office of Strategic Services records that have been in your care since the dissolution of OSS. At that time, mutually agreeable restrictions on access to the records apparently had been worked out: (1) C.I.A. screening was to withhold documents containing names of sources still requiring protection; (2) NARS' subsequent review was to insure the continued protection of non-OSS originated information still requiring security classification, as well as foreign government information. This has been our practice during the past 5 years in reviewing OSS Research and Analysis Division and other military records containing OSS documents.

When the first increment was transferred to NARS, however, CIA went a step further with a specific requirement that we withhold names of all persons affiliated with OSS. To date attempts to resolve this discrepancy have been unsuccessful. We do not understand the reasons for this further restriction because to our knowledge CIA screeners do not themselves delete all names, certainly not those of deceased persons or those whose OSS affiliation is a matter of proud public knowledge.

From our standpoint, too, this restriction would be unworkable and would effectively negate the original purpose of the transfer of the records, which was to make public as much of the OSS story as possible, within the limits of present national security considerations. Screening documents for individual names would be a resource-consuming operation. The documents released following such a screening, moreover, would be too limited and fragmentary to be useful to most researchers or satisfy their interests. Such a situation is likely to provoke acute researcher dissatisfaction and stimulate many objections and demands under the Freedom of Information Act, which would absorb still more staff time, both ours and yours.

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We are still hopeful, nevertheless, that our two agencies can devise a reasonable resolution between the public's need to know and our Government's security requirements, and between that need to know and the right of privacy of public servants, as well as as private citizens.

Sincerely,



ROBERT M. WARNER  
Archivist of the United States

10-18-81 10:00 AM

EB

10-18-81 10:00 AM

10-18-81 10:00 AM